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# Gossip and conflicts as socialization practices among doormen in their work relationships within a residential building

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## Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze the socialization practices of doormen in their work relationships in a residential building. The notion of sociability by George Simmel is adopted to investigate the practices. Observations and interviews were conducted with the doormen of a residential building in Maringá, Paraná. This research highlighted the dynamics related to the work of older doormen in residential buildings, emphasizing the role of socialization practices, through gossip and conflicts, in the organization of work routines. It is identified that gossip serves to optimize and balance the work of the doormen. The conflicts demonstrate the present ageism and the precarious economic situation in which older doormen, in addition to formal work, need to perform extra services for their livelihoods. These results lead to the theoretical contribution that lies in revealing the practices of socialization, gossip, and conflicts as mechanisms of sociability in work relationships.

**Keywords:** aging; older workers; sociability; gossip; conflicts.

## Introduction

The process of aging in the Brazilian population has been the focus of important reflections in organizational research (da Silva & Helal, 2022; Seidl *et al.*, 2022; Sousa & Baltazar, 2023; Vasconcelos, 2012). Studies such as those by Amorim *et al.* (2019) have highlighted the increasing participation of older professionals in the labor market. The growth of these studies in Brazil and around the world is a reflection of the aging population process that has prompted reflections in different fields of knowledge about the social (Minkler & Estes, 2020; von Hippel *et al.*, 2008), economic (Minkler & Estes, 2020), anthropological (Buch, 2015; Lamb, 2014), political (Wong & Carvalho, 2006), and health effects (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2019; Lima-Costa, 2018; Veras & Oliveira, 2018) in different societies.

If in the 1990s the geometric growth rate of the Brazilian population was 1.93 and the number of people considered older people, aged sixty years or older, was around ten million (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE], 2000), currently the lowest geometric rate, 0.52%, has been recorded, and the number of older people in 2022 was over 32 million (IBGE, 2023a, 2023b). This population decline, combined with the increase of older people in Brazil, potentially impacts the composition of the workforce in the country. Thus, older workers and their unique characteristics become the center of discussion in society and academia (Caines *et al.*, 2020; Johnson *et al.*, 2017; Pfrombeck *et al.*, 2024; St-Onge & Beauchamp Legault, 2022; Tschopp *et al.*, 2016). However, studies in Brazil on older workers and aging in the workplace are still incipient in the field of administration (Silva *et al.*, 2021).

Despite studies such as that of da Silva & Helal (2019) highlighting the need for this debate, this topic still needs to be widely discussed, especially from theoretical categories that enable understanding the daily work life of these people in this demographic transition process of the composition of the Brazilian labor market. This is because several studies have already highlighted the importance of social interactions and sociabilities in work relationships (Basford & Offermann, 2012; Lin & Kwantes, 2015; Mesquita *et al.*, 2020; Winslow *et al.*, 2019). Although interaction is something fundamental at work, the sociability between older workers and other people belonging to their workplaces is not the subject of Brazilian academic research.

The concept of sociability adopted in this study refers to the form of association and is connected to the realization determined by the content of the association (Simmel, 1949). This notion of sociability is characterized not merely by a simple social interaction but by the analysis of lived experience and its social modes of organization, revealing the conflict of normative orders and broader cultural archetypes of society (Maia, 2001). The theoretical perspective of this study is the Simmelian one (Simmel, 1949). Given this, the epistemological focus is on Formal Sociology, in which George Simmel developed his concept of sociability (Fantinel, 2016). The author's sociology is conceptualized as the sociology of interaction (Tedesco, 2007).

The research field is considered to be doormen workers. In the classification of intermittent jobs, building doormen are among the top twenty occupations in the Brazilian scenario (Annual Social Information Report [Relação Anual de Informações Sociais - RAIS], 2022). Despite this relevance in the world of work, older doormen are excluded from organizational analyses.

That said, the aim of this study is to analyze the socialization practices of doormen in their work relationships in a residential building. Socialization practices are understood as the forms of

association or interaction (Simmel, 1949) present in work relationships, which in this context refers to the doorway of a residential building. In addition to identifying the socialization practices adopted by the doormen, the aim is to analyze the tensions present in these practices within their work dynamics.

For the production of empirical material, observations and interviews were conducted. Interpretative analysis is used for analyzing the field diaries and transcriptions. This study contributes to the literature on aging in organizations by identifying socialization practices, gossip, and conflicts as mechanisms of sociability in work relationships.

In addition to this introduction, the theoretical framework is presented in the next section, followed by the methodological framework, then results and discussion, and finally, final remarks.

## Theoretical framework

### *Ageism and older workers*

For a long time, aging was defined solely by aspects marked by chronological age (Silva *et al.*, 2021). For example, the number of years from the date of birth. Chronological age is still a factor used in several countries to define who is an older person. In Brazil, at sixty years of age, an individual is recognized as an older person who acquires specific rights. In search of broader understandings of the phenomenon, perspectives such as the biopsychosocial approach have emerged, which integrates biological, psychological, and sociocultural dimensions. For de Moura and Freitas (2023), understanding the aging process as a socially constructed category makes it possible to comprehend that this process transcends stages of the biological cycle. In this sense, the condition of aging or of someone considered an older person involves such dimensions.

The biological or physical aspect includes elements such as changes in organ function and cellular aging (Whitbourne & Whitbourne, 2020). The psychic dimension involves cognitive aspects of memory and learning that change with age (Whitbourne & Whitbourne, 2020). The sociocultural aspect pertains to the roles individuals have in society, behaviors, language, and habits (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2019). This sociocultural dimension also reveals the subjectivity in how individuals perceive themselves and make decisions based on their perception of aging: while some people stop working upon reaching retirement age, others continue.

Moreover, culture is relevant (Koury, 2014) because the culture shows that the way people define age varies between cultures. For example, while in Western cultures, there are different social roles for people in their twenties and sixties, in other cultures, these social roles do not diverge (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2019). From the Brazilian political perspective, an older person is someone who is sixty years old; however, in the job market, individuals are already seen as unproductive at fifty due to ageism. Thus, although it is complex to define who is an older person or an older worker, the notions on the subject need to consider biopsychosocial conditions.

Ageism, a category discussed in society and studies on older workers, is understood by Robert Butler (1980), the creator of the term ageism, from three notions: (a) harmful attitudes towards older people, (b) discriminatory practices in employment, and (c) institutional policies that sustain stereotypes about aging. Ageism is present in multiple social spaces, such as the media,

government institutions, and the labor market (Goldani, 2010). This is because the values rooted in society make old age perceived as the most severe period for the individual (Rodrigues, 2022).

Given this context, studies on ageism have been increasing (Ayalon *et al.*, 2019; Higgs & Gilleard, 2022; Marques *et al.*, 2020; Swift & Chasteen, 2021) and authors (Levy *et al.*, 2022) analyze ageist practices and refer to them as a "global ageism crisis" because they are repeated in various countries and dimensions of individuals' lives. For example, studies have shown that older people face ageism when using public transportation (de Moura & Freitas, 2023), healthcare systems (Chrisler *et al.*, 2016), and in the labor market. Moreover, ageism is intersected by the categories of race and ethnicity (Williams & Wilson, 2001), sexual diversity, gender (Kneale *et al.*, 2021), and social class (Lang *et al.*, 2009).

For older black people, age discrimination intensifies the oppression during this stage of life, in addition to the experiences of racism they have faced (Steward *et al.*, 2023). The intersection of race and ageism exacerbates the disadvantage experienced by historically excluded individuals (Farrell *et al.*, 2022). In a study conducted by Steward *et al.* (2023), an older black attendant reveals being ignored by customers who choose her younger and white colleagues. This illustrates how ageism is racialized based on age and race (Steward *et al.*, 2023).

At the intersection of age and social class, ageism reveals itself as distinctions and privileges between rich and poor older people are observed. Lang *et al.* (2009) argue that the socioeconomic condition of older people is associated with aspects of well-being and that when individuals are poor and live in disadvantaged areas, they are more vulnerable. Moreover, from the perspective of social relations, studies (Krause & Borawski-Clark, 1995) have identified that there are differences between older individuals from high-class backgrounds with academic qualifications and those from low-class backgrounds regarding the social support received in old age.

Similarly to what happens in society, in organizational spaces, studies show that beyond gender issues, age also plays a role, as even in executive positions, there seems to be no place for aging females (Cepellos & Tonelli, 2022). As they age within organizations, women need to fight against ageism related to (a) physical appearance, such as dyeing their gray hair, as it is a sign of aging and associated with negative aspects, while for men it is a sign of charm, and (b) their capabilities, as they face the devaluation of their skills as at the beginning of their careers (Cepellos & Tonelli, 2022).

Several scientific fields have dedicated themselves to the study of the phenomenon. Seminal studies in the field of sociology (Bytheway, 1995; Goldstein & Beall, 1981; Palmore, 1999), especially in the sociology of aging and ageism (Lynott & Lynott, 1996; Marshall, 2007), had already pointed out the social separation between young people and the older (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005).

It is in gerontology that the concept of ageism was developed by gerontologist Robert Butler (1980) and on which contemporary studies are based. In psychology, studies were already exploring the topic in the 1980s (Gatz & Pearson, 1988; Kimmel, 1988), and, later on, ageism was addressed with another category: stereotype (Nelson, 2002). In the fields of gerontology and psychology, important theoretical perspectives also emerged, such as the life stage perspective (Zacher & Froidevaux, 2021) and, mainly, the lifespan perspective, which understands that aging involves consistency and change in behavior throughout life (Baltes, 1987).

In organizational studies, research on ageism discusses the ageism faced by older workers in the labor market (Amorim *et al.*, 2019; King & Bryant, 2017; Vasconcelos, 2012; Yeung *et al.*, 2021), and its implications within this context, for example, in the permanence of older professionals (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011) and the management practices of these individuals (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Boehm *et al.*, 2021).

Some authors (Loth & Silveira, 2014) identified three stereotypical perceptions about older workers. The first is self-stereotyped perceptions; older people attribute positive aspects related to age: maturity and experience. The second, perceptions of others, is associated with negative characteristics such as the decline of physical and cognitive abilities. Finally, in the perceptions of young people, there is a paradox between positive and negative characteristics, which results in the perception of competition for organizational spaces.

According to Goldani (2010), age discrimination occurs when negative beliefs related to old age materialize. Symbolically, abilities decline, and people are displaced from work and social life (Rodrigues, 2022). And socially, in the face of the youthful demand to meet the market, the productive incapacity of the older person is legitimized (Rodrigues, 2022). The absence of inclusion of older people in the workforce stems from the appreciation of youthfulness for the economy, which links the end of the productive period to age and excludes these individuals (Paolini, 2016).

In this sense, research indicates that negative attributes are placed on older workers: limitations in performing heavy physical work, little flexibility, and difficulty adapting to changes and new technologies (Cepellos & Tonelli, 2017). Such conflicts can escalate to extreme situations, and harassment can be observed (Tonelli *et al.*, 2020), for example, jokes about age, offensive remarks in front of colleagues or clients, sexual offenses, and even physical assaults (Blackstone, 2013).

Focusing on the potential of older workers, recent studies suggest that they should be considered valuable assets, as their knowledge and expertise produce an authentic source of intellectual capital (Vasconcelos, 2018), and there are also positive attributes regarding these professionals: greater emotional balance, loyalty to the company, punctuality, a higher capacity to perform diagnoses compared to younger workers, and low levels of absenteeism (Cepellos & Tonelli, 2017).

Although studies show the potential of having older workers (Tonelli *et al.*, 2020), empirical research demonstrates that ageist practices in Brazil are present before individuals enter organizations, such as barriers in recruitment and selection processes (Amorim *et al.*, 2019; Cepellos & Tonelli, 2017). And when they are integrated into the organization, there is a lack of permanence policies (Tonelli *et al.*, 2020) and adaptation of work to aspects of health and ergonomics (Cepellos & Tonelli, 2017). Thus, an absence and failures of age management practices are observed in Brazilian organizations.

Although it is difficult to define who can be considered an older worker, studies refer to people over fifty years old (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Amorim *et al.*, 2019). And in this study, the age cutoff is set at fifty years and above because a large part of the national and international literature defines it this way (Amorim *et al.*, 2019; Saba & Guerin, 2005; St-Onge & Beauchamp Legault, 2022), and because work-related conflicts associated with age become more pronounced starting from this age range.

### *Sociability and modes of socialization*

People live in a world of social encounters that involve them in face-to-face manner or mediated by other individuals (Goffman, 2012). Resulting from the recognition of sociability as a fundamental part of human life, various fields, such as Education (Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2023; Weidlich & Bastiaens, 2019), Psychology (Breil *et al.*, 2019; Brook & Schmidt, 2020), and Sociology and Anthropology (Doré & Ribeiro, 2019; Grillo, 2019) have addressed the concept, and this concept has been investigated in different ways in current studies.

Recent studies have analyzed the role that sociability plays in engagement in activities (Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2023), its manifestations in individuals throughout their lives (Brook & Schmidt, 2020), and how sociability, in social interactions, is shaped by the personality and situation in which individuals find themselves (Breil *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the literature also discusses the differences in sociability that occur in physical (Thurnell-Read, 2021) and digital environments, as well as the differences within the digital realm between making a call and sending a message (Harari *et al.*, 2020).

In analyses of how environmental transformations affect sociability, some research indicates that neoliberal urban interventions reduce residents' sociability and their sense of belonging to the neighborhood in which they live (Link *et al.*, 2022). And in these environments, individuals interact through passive sociability (people reading on a bench), ephemeral (greetings and small talk), and/or enduring (meeting friends on the street) (Mehta, 2019), or with conflicts through violent sociability (Grillo, 2019; Silva & Menezes, 2019).

The sociability of different groups is also addressed in the literature. Santos and Martinelli (2019) analyzed the sociability of transgender and transsexual people and identified that these individuals face sociability difficulties constituted by inequality, intolerance, and violence in the family and at work. And Santos *et al.* (2020) explored how children with physical disabilities interact within sports. For boys, performance in sports reaffirms masculinity through strength, while for girls, identities were reaffirmed by body characteristics that generate attraction.

The notion of sociability adopted in this research is understood as a form of pure association, free from content and substance (Simmel, 1949). For George Simmel, society exists based on social interactions between individuals with or against each other (Tedesco, 2007). Different authors, such as Barros (2008), Fantinel *et al.* (2012), Fantinel and Fischer (2012), Chiesa and Kihara (2015), and Frisby and Featherstone (1997), present complementary perspectives on the concept of sociability based on Simmel. Both agree that Simmel is recognized as one of the main scholars on this topic, emphasizing sociability as an autonomous and playful form of association, in which interaction between individuals plays a fundamental role. This author highlights the importance of cordiality, kindness, and the pursuit of establishing social bonds, with sociability being free of specific contents and autonomous in itself.

Fantinel *et al.* (2012) expand the understanding of sociability, considering it as a form of human socialization, in which reciprocal interactions constitute and dissolve society. The authors highlight that sociability is an archetypal, playful form of organizing human experience, emphasizing that its interest and objective lie in the interaction itself. Conversation is presented as a basic modality of sociability, in which the content is not the purpose itself, but how the social bond is maintained. Fantinel and Fischer (2012) highlight the evolution of the concept of sociability over

time, with anthropology adding to Simmel's sociological considerations. These authors emphasize the empirical approach to sociability, analyzing modes, patterns, and forms of concrete social relationships in contexts of interaction and social coexistence. Furthermore, they highlight the redefinition of sociability by the Chicago School, which approaches it as an analysis of social change and the spatialized conceptions of the social and the space.

Chiesa and Kihara (2015) explore the "impulse of sociability" present in social interactions, emphasizing its autonomous and playful form of association. The authors emphasize that sociability goes beyond specific content, adding a sense of satisfaction from being socialized and valuing the formation of society as a whole. Sociability is seen as a way to reduce friction and prioritize the balance between individual impulse and the primacy of the group.

Frisby and Featherstone (1997) present sociability as a pure interaction, devoid of external objectives, seen as an ideal social game in which the participants are considered equal. Sociability can manifest in various forms, from conversation to flirtation, and can be formalized in rules of etiquette and behavior. However, these authors warn of the risk of sociability becoming a caricature of itself when social forms become ends in themselves, resulting in its disintegration.

These various authors contribute to a comprehensive understanding of sociability, highlighting its autonomy, playful nature, and lack of clear objectives. The interaction between individuals and the formation of social bonds are central elements of this phenomenon, which plays an important role in the organization of society. Sociability is seen as a form of human socialization in which the interest lies in the interaction itself but it is also influenced by specific interests and power dynamics.

Sociability allows for the understanding of social interactions in broad contexts and specific places, such as in workplace relationships. In broad contexts, sociability has been understood as an elementary dimension of social judgment that people use to reflect on others and themselves (Crocetti *et al.*, 2019). This is because human interaction is imbued with symbols (Doré & Ribeiro, 2019) and meanings attributed to the actions of others (Blumer, 2017).

And the way some individuals perceive themselves through sociability impacts their interactions in different contexts (Crocetti *et al.*, 2019). For example, in a study conducted by Breil *et al.* (2019), it was identified that, in addition to personality shaping sociability in social interactions (extroverts interact more), the situation also plays a role in relationships, as people tend to interact more in positive and low-obligation situations. And although social structures are constituted by laws (Goffman, 1974), which may restrict interactions, the literature on sociability demonstrates the existence of feelings of social connection created from social interaction facilitated by the welcoming environment that some contexts offer (Thurnell-Read, 2021).

In this process of social interaction, gossip and conflicts are present, as some authors show (Fonseca, 2000; Koury, 2014). Koury and Barbosa (2020), when analyzing interactions in everyday situations in small towns, identified that gossip operated as a way to access creative tension, revealing a network of solidarity among the residents, but which both unites and separates individuals in the city's communication. Furthermore, these authors, when analyzing Turner (2013), comment that social roles can be temporarily suppressed by the feeling of solidarity. Since gossip involves the interpretation that the individual makes of the other and their actions, the implications do not occur solely due to the possibility of the news changing (Gaiarsa, 2015), but also involve

moral reputation, no matter how ordinary the gossip may be (Fonseca, 2000; Kourry & Barbosa, 2020).

In addition, regarding the constitutive aspects of everyday interaction, Kourry (2014) also sought to understand social relations in neighborhoods of large cities. His study revealed that although there is an extensive network of solidarity and friendship, conflicts are present in social interactions. And tensions and fights are seen as relatively trivial. Thus, moral-emotional and cognitive-behavioral aspects are involved in gossip and conflicts (Barbosa, 2018).

In work relationships, socialization practices are established in different ways. Chiesa and Kihara (2015) comment that sociability emerges from the symbolic elements of interactions in the daily work environment. Serrate and Fantinel (2014), in their investigation, identified modes of sociability among café employees. The socialization among employees through conversation during moments of low activity at work and the creation of social bonds between employees and frequent customers. Silence, restrained movements, and discreet conversations are also practices of socialization, which mark the sociability of the place that refers to a space of silence. In this sense, sociability is also established in a more timid and restrained manner.

Other studies examine how spaces already created within the logic of socialization, such as coworking, contribute to the development of spaces for social interaction (Mesquita *et al.* 2020). For the authors, these spaces are created through three practices: (1) self-management, which involves infrastructure, (2) the association of aggregated businesses and their interaction, and (3) the association of community practices. And in each practice, essential elements for the creation of a social space emerge, such as the social identity of the place (Mesquita *et al.* 2020).

## Methodological framework

This study is related to functionalism as the practices of socialization, gossip, and conflicts have functions in the context of doorman work. Due to this theoretical-epistemological choice being based on Simmel, who was associated with the Chicago School of Sociology and had Simmel as one of its main theoretical sources (Fantinel, 2016), it can be considered that this study is also aligned with the tradition of that school.

To investigate socialization practices, this qualitative study employs moderate participant observation (Musante & DeWalt, 2010) and semi-structured interviews (Chaves Júnior *et al.*, 2024). The investigation took place at the entrance of a residential building known as the Medelin building. The name of the location and all the people mentioned in this research have had their names changed in accordance with ethical guidelines.

The Medelin building is located near the State University of Maringá, Paraná, Brazil. The choice of this place was made for three reasons: (1) It is one of the most important student residence buildings due to its good location, accessibility, and structure, (2) doormen are generally an excluded category in the field of Administration, especially older doormen, and (3) because the doormen of buildings are over fifty years old, as the literature defines older workers as people over fifty years old (Amorim *et al.*, 2019; Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Cepellos & Tonelli, 2017).

The Medelin building has thirteen floors and 132 apartment units. There are five employees at Medelin: four doormen, three men and one woman, and a janitor. Besides these, there is a



professional manager, but he is not considered an employee of the building. The building has a 24-hour reception, and the doormen are scheduled in a 12-hour on, 36-hour off shift pattern. The shift change times are 7 AM and 7 PM. All the doormen have signed workbooks, characterizing formal employment.

For this research, out of the four doormen in the building, three participated, two men and one woman, as the other was under fifty years old. Their ages range from 51 to seventy years, and their time working in the building is between eight and fifteen years. Due to the doormen working on alternate days, to supplement their income, they seek extra jobs such as selling cosmetics, delivering meals via apps, and providing security at parties. One of the doormen, in addition to already being retired, also does plumbing work as an extra. With them, the observations and interviews were conducted.

Access to the field was facilitated by the building's caretaker (Júlia), as one of the authors knows her and, being the worker who is most present in the building, she interacts with and knows the doormen the best. This facilitated access to the field. The purpose of the research was explained and it was requested if she could talk to the doormen about it. After receiving a positive response from Júlia, one of the authors went to the building's reception, explained the objectives of the research, and asked if they authorized the conduct of the research on the premises, which received approval. The building manager was also informed and gave a positive response.

The observations were made by the first author of this article. In this initial contact with the doormen, it was asked at what times the observations could be conducted so as not to disrupt their work routines. They responded that it could be done at any time and suggested the hours between noon and two in the afternoon and between late afternoon and early evening, as these are the periods with the most movement of residents and external people. We chose those times to follow their suggestions and, above all, because the study aimed to observe the interaction of the doormen.

The logic of moderate participant observation was adopted, in which the researcher is seen as such, is present at the place of action, interacts with people, but does not participate actively (Musante & DeWalt, 2010). Such a choice was justified by the impossibility of a more active or complete participation due to the restrictions imposed by the work regulations at the reception. The researcher interacted by talking with the doormen, other workers, and residents when they passed through the reception (for example, good morning or good afternoon).

The observations took place from April to May 2023 at the building's entrance. Eleven days of observations were conducted, some during the midday period, others in the late afternoon, totaling around twenty hours. In addition, the observations by the first author took place with the doormen, Liberato and Marta. Field notes were taken for the production of field diaries, as prescribed by the observation method (Musante & DeWalt, 2010).

The observations made it possible to recognize actions that were beyond the discourses, since only with the interviews the forms of sociability would not be perceived (Chiesa & Kihara, 2015). The observations helped, for example, to see the daily interactions of the doormen and the constitutive elements of the process, such as the existing conflicts and gossip. To further explore these socialization practices, three interviews were conducted with the doormen in June 2023, which in total lasted 3 hours and 10 minutes. The semi-structured interview guide was constructed

based on the observations. A recorder was used to conduct the interviews, and each participant's approval was requested.

The chosen method, observation, has limitations. For example, the presence of the researcher on-site can influence the participants' behavior, causing them to act differently than usual because they are being observed. This may have influenced what was observed by the researcher in this study, making it impossible for them to analyze the interactions in their usual state. However, the interviews helped to mitigate these limitations. In this sense, it is recognized that the researcher's insertion alters the investigated location to some extent. In the context of this study, the observation conducted by one of the authors altered the usual interactions of the doormen, as a "stranger" inserted themselves into the work environment. For example, the way the doormen interacted with the residents and other workers, what was not said to avoid revealing, or what was said with the aim of diverting attention. In this way, the interactions of the doormen had to take on new forms while the researcher was present.

However, the researcher took some precautions in the relationship with the participants. In addition to providing information following research ethical guidelines (preservation of identity and voluntary participation), the observation periods were conducted with the participants' permission. During the observations, the researcher informed that they would make some notes in their notebook (field diaries) to remember and that, if they wanted, they could see them. They commented that they didn't mind. Two of the doormen, when conversing and during interviews with the researcher, showed concern about not being able to answer the questions "correctly" or recount an event because the observer was a doctoral student, and they did not have access to education. The researcher said that there was no right or wrong and that he was there to learn from them because although he was at the University, he didn't know everything, but the participants knew a lot about their work. After these interactions, the participants felt more at ease. In summary, these actions aimed to establish a relationship of trust and transparency.

Regarding the position of the researcher and participant concerning the chosen method, the participant's position was central, as it is from their actions and interpretations that the repertoire of the studied phenomenon is produced for the researcher to interpret and analyze. Although the researcher was not a member of the front desk staff, he was an active agent who, to some extent, participated in socialization practices by interacting with the doormen and other agents, witnessing gossip and conflicts, and listening to the existing discourses of the studied location. Thus, while the participants' role was to build understanding, the researcher adopted a reflective stance that is presented in the following paragraphs.

The field notes were written in a Word document. The interviews were transcribed using the Logus Academy software and, subsequently, the interviews were listened to again to adjust the transcriptions. The analysis of the empirical material was based on the interpretation and dense description (Geertz, 2008) of the field diaries and the transcripts. It is understood that this choice presents implications and controversies. For Geertz (2008), what researchers call data are, in fact, their own constructions of other people's constructions. This implies recognizing that what is analyzed or interpreted in this article about socialization practices is, in reality, as Geertz (2008) states, second-hand interpretations, since only the participants make first-hand interpretations of their cultures. This means that the descriptions made here are part of the reality in which the participants live, and it is not possible to access it in its entirety. Moreover, what is interpreted is

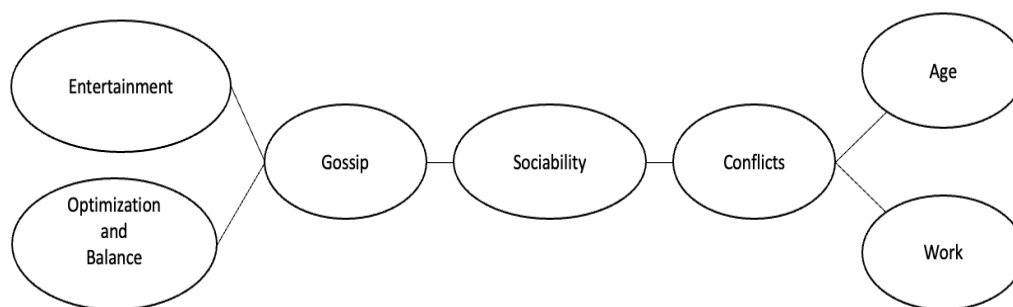
not the raw social discourse of the participants, as direct access is not possible, except marginally or to a small part of what they can lead one to understand (Geertz, 2008).

Despite these controversies, Geertz (2008) points out how to deal with these issues and the potential of interpretive analysis. For the author, analysis is selecting significant structures of human behavior that are conceived as symbolic action. In this sense, the first step is to pay attention to the behavior of the actions that unfold, as access to this symbolic empirical is gained by inspecting it. Careful observation is a way to capture the web of meanings (Regasson, 2024). Thus, Geertz (2008) suggests that the analysis should begin with the interpretation of the participants' intentions and then move on to the systematization of these interpretations. And that the description should be calculated according to the constructions that are assumed to be used by the participants to understand the actions that happen to them.

Operationally, the analysis began with the search for excerpts related to the sociability of the doormen. After selection, this material was analyzed with the aim of identifying the configuration of sociability. In other words, what were the socialization practices in the studied context. The categories gossip and conflicts emerged. Again, analyses were conducted in these two categories by reading the excerpts, and subcategories related to each were identified. In the next section, the results of the analysis are presented.

## Results and discussion

From the interpretative analysis (Geertz, 2008) of sociability, two socialization practices of the older doormen of the residential building were identified: gossip and conflicts. From gossip emerged entertainment and optimization and balance, and from conflicts, age and work (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Sociability of older workers

Sources: elaborated by the authors.

### *Sociability*

The sociability of the doormen occurs among the doormen themselves, with the building manager and the caretaker Júlia, people who provide services in the building (gas, repairs, and others), delivery service people, residents, and sometimes the residents' families. Sociability occurs in specific spaces, making it impossible to understand it in a decontextualized manner (Fantinel &

Fischer, 2012). It is at the reception that all interactions that will occur in the building begin, whether external, by calling the doorman, or, more commonly, people going to the building. Due to more than half of the reception wall being made of glass, the doormen see who arrives and leaves the building, and anyone passing by the reception can also see who is at the reception.

Sociability starts with the initiative of the people with the doormen. Although the doormen are available to anyone who wants to ask questions or chat, the interaction will always depend more on the resident than on the doormen, as it is not their role to "go" and "initiate" conversation, since they cannot seek out this type of interaction (Field Notes, 2023). Some residents greet the doormen and others do not. Greetings and conversations with the doormen enable them to memorize the residents' names: "I memorize those who greet me, who pass by and say good morning, smile, who talk to me; there are residents who pass by here and neither greet nor look, so I don't know their names" (Field Notes, 2023).

This approach, through conversations or even just greetings when passing by the reception, allows the doormen to recognize the voices of the residents when they call from their apartments to the reception to ask if there are washing machines available, if there are packages, or to clarify doubts: *"Do you know why I recognize them by their voice? Because the person passes by here: 'Oh, Mr. Liberato, good morning! Good afternoon, Mr. Liberato'"* (Liberato, interviewee 1, 2023).

The next step, after having their name memorized and their voice recognized – due to the residents treating the doormen well – may involve the residents receiving favors and having advantages in the building, for example, using two dryers at the same time (only one dryer is allowed to be used for a maximum period of three hours per day), or exceeding the three-hour limit on the washing machine and not having their clothes removed (after three hours, if the resident does not remove their clothes from the machine, another resident can remove them and use them): "Whoever is nice to me, who greets, who says good morning, a person with whom I have a certain affinity" (Field Notes, 2023). It is a reciprocity: the residents are polite to the doormen, the doormen help the residents, and as a token of gratitude, the doormen receive gifts and food: *"A cake of this size arrived, oh, filled for me"* (Liberato, interviewed 1, 2023).

In interactions, even the minimal ones, the first practice of socialization is identified: gossip.

### *Gossip as entertainment and optimization and balance.*

As mentioned, it is at the reception that people enter, exit, call, and deliveries arrive, and where two large televisions display images from the 43 cameras scattered throughout the building. It is at the reception that the dynamics of the building take place and are observed. As a consequence, the habits of the residents are known by the doormen:

*The doorman has access to practically all the resident's intimacies, I know who you come in with, I know who you go out with, I know the time you come in, I know the time you go out. I know what you buy at the supermarket because your groceries usually arrive here at the front desk... it's the reputation of all front desks in all condominiums that the doorman knows everything, even people's most intimate secrets... that's why people usually say the doorman is the gossip of the condominium. We know people's routines.* (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).

The fact that the doormen know personal information and the routines of the residents makes them known as gossipers, not only in the context of this research but, as Marta states, in all building lobbies. The daily lives of the residents become the target of gossip when shared by the doormen. Since they know the residents' routines so well, when comments about something arise, it's not even necessary to mention the resident's name to know who it's about: *"By the subject, Júlia and I, you don't even need to say, we already know who it's about"* (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).

The comments about the daily life of the building, especially regarding the residents, occur at different moments and situations: after a resident passes through the lobby when leaving the building or upon entering when accessing the elevator. Given this, gossip at the reception acquires a value of relaxation and promotes the function of **entertainment** (Foster, 2004) among the building's workers:

*When everyone gathers in the kitchen, sometimes they make a jocose comment like, "Wow, so-and-so must be really hot, right?" Because every day she's with someone different. It's not something to criticize, it shouldn't be taken in a pejorative way, we talk about it to lighten the mood... In a conversation among the colleagues in the condominium lobby, people comment: "Oh, last night so-and-so, two guys came to the apartment." "Wow, two?" "Two?" "The other day, three came late." (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).*

Comments on casual "hookups" are the ones that promote entertainment the most. However, as Marta said, there are no criticisms about it, but rather playful comments on the subject. When the doormen are curious about something in the residents' lives that they couldn't gather through observation, they ask in a relaxed manner and use playful strategies that also entertain the residents, as they laugh and join in the fun: *"Sometimes I ask, 'Oh, I missed you.'" I create this argument, right... then I asked her, this is a playful gesture, right. "I was almost sending the police after you because I missed you"... she gave that laugh"* (Liberato, interviewee, 1). It is important to mention that questions about the residents' life events are only asked to those they have a close relationship with.

Some research indicates that gossip is more likely to occur when the interaction between people transforms into a relationship in which socialization is part (Rosnow, 2001). However, in this study, even with the relationships formed, the socialization of gossip does not occur among all individuals. Gossip in the building happens in an organized manner. There are limits to who participates in the gossip and where it can take place. Those who participate in the gossip are the doormen and some of the building workers, usually Júlia. They gossip among themselves about the residents, but they don't make comments about residents to other residents: *"I observe, but like this, I'm not going to go around commenting in the building... not with residents, not with residents because that could harm us, right"* (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).

At the same time that they gossip and enjoy gossiping, they recognize that there need to be limits, as gossip has its consequences. Former doormen have already recorded residents speaking ill of other doormen. The intention was to prove that the specific resident was not a friend of Marta and that she should be careful. Marta listened to the recording but decided not to confront the

resident who had gossiped about her. Due to residents realizing that the doormen are aware of the flow of entry and exit in the building and contain cameras, some residents seek information considered delicate. The girlfriend of a guy (they live together) traveled for a week, and he brought three different women to the apartment. When the girlfriend arrived, she went to the concierge to ask if the boyfriend had brought girls over while she was away. "Look at the catch-22," this problematic situation (Field Notes, May 2023).

Gossip, while serving as a form of entertainment and work optimizer, also has emotional consequences. Gossip can both relieve stress and create divisions between the doormen and the residents (Waddington, 2005). The constant interaction around gossip creates a sphere of trust and distrust, depending on the nature of the conversations and the relationships between those involved. These emotional dynamics can directly impact the well-being of workers, especially when they are confronted with delicate situations that involve both personal and professional fields.

Although there is a tendency to understand gossip as something negative, gossip also has positive aspects. In the literature, gossip is classified as both positive and negative (Kniffin & Sloan Wilson, 2010; Kurland & Pelled, 2000; Lee & Barnes, 2021). The consequences of gossip are positive when they generate trust and cooperation (Lee & Barnes, 2021; Sun *et al.*, 2023), regulate emotional denials (Dores Cruz *et al.*, 2019), and relieve stress (Waddington, 2005). And the negative part is when there is a breakdown of trust and divisions at work (De Gouveia *et al.*, 2005).

In this research, the positive one occurs when someone speaks well of a resident, praising them or as entertainment, and the negative one occurs when these residents display rude behavior towards the doormen: *"Wow, that guy is annoying, that guy fights with everyone..." And there's the positive side too, right: 'oh, that resident is really cool,' it's not just negative, there's a positive side"* (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).

Yet, regarding the positive aspects of gossip, based on observations and interviews, it is noted that gossip serves another function, in addition to entertainment, as mentioned earlier, which is important. The function of **optimizing** the work of building doormen is to maintain the **balance** of daily life. The function of gossip in research is widely discussed and generally presents the same functions, for example, the function of information, entertainment, friendship, influence (Foster, 2004), social integration and social segregation (Sun *et al.*, 2023), but the literature does not present gossip as a function of optimization and balance at work, as seen in this study. Gossiping with colleagues about events enables the smooth functioning of work and tranquility in the workplace, as Marta says:

*Despite our colleagues, they find out, there's no way around it, we work as a team. So, if something typical happens in your apartment, I have to pass it on to my colleague so he knows... And it's something like we ask for the correct progress so that our work is more relaxed.* (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).

The teamwork for the doormen is to keep them updated on daily events, as two doormen do not stay together for twelve hours, but meet during shift changes, exchange messages via cell phone, and make calls. With the other building workers, in Julia's case, the information is shared several times throughout the day when she appears at the front desk and either delivers or receives

information from the doormen. The manager obtains the information, usually in person, as he appears at the front desk almost every day (being a professional manager, he lives elsewhere), or, if he is not present and it is urgent, by cell phone message or call.

In teamwork, the function of gossip exceeds its role of entertainment and also becomes a mechanism of social control, allowing workers to regulate each other's behavior through the sharing of private information (Dores Cruz *et al.*, 2019). This practice facilitates the maintenance of strategic alliances in the workplace and allows the doormen to manage the boundaries of what is acceptable or not in the social interactions within the building.

For being a place with many university students, especially those who have recently graduated from high school and entered university, the age composition is mostly people between eighteen and 24, young individuals who are still very much connected to their parents, for emotional reasons, but above all economic ones. It is the parents who pay the rent, the condominium fee, and the other expenses of the resident students. In this way, the daytime doormen end up participating in this parent-child dynamic. The electricity bill of a university student exceeded five hundred reais, and his mother talked to Marta and Júlia about it. They were discussing what might have happened for the bill to reach that amount (Field Notes, 2023). In this sense, as an intermediaries between parents and children, gossip optimizes their work dynamics: *"Because sometimes there are parents who call here asking about their child: 'Oh, I can't reach my child, did you see my child today?'" So, if I know... it's much easier to respond to the father and the mother"* (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).

This form of sociability between the doormen and the residents can sometimes be powerful, and these doormen send messages when they don't see certain residents. There have already been "delicate cases in the building, such as suicides" and others (Field Notes, 2023). Some doormen prefer that residents inform them if they are traveling, for example, as this prevents them from worrying if they don't see the residents after a certain period.

In addition to its role as entertainment, gossip plays important psychosocial functions in the work environment of doormen. Studies such as those by Foster (2004) and Rosnow (2001) indicate that gossip can act as a mechanism of social regulation, influencing behaviors and relationships within the workgroup. In this study, it is identified that by sharing information about the daily lives of the residents, the doormen build a network of trust and reciprocity that not only facilitates interactions among them but also optimizes the work of monitoring and maintaining the balance of the building's daily activities.

By recognizing that informal interactions can have a direct impact on work efficiency, the study advances the discussion on the functions of gossip in the organizational context. In this sense, gossip is not just a form of entertainment but a valuable resource for coordinating teamwork, especially in prolonged work environments with high turnover, such as in residential buildings. Moreover, gossip functions as an optimizer and balance for the work of the doormen in the building. Although gossip causes conflicts and conflicts turn into gossip, it is through sociability, the network of trust, and reciprocity that gossip and conflicts emerge in this study.

### *Age and work conflicts*

The existing conflicts in the context of the doormen at the Medellin building occur as age and work conflicts. In the **age**-related conflicts, ageism was present. On the first day of observation with Marta, her aging linked to advanced age stereotypes was recurrent, with remarks like "you know how it is when you're old, right" (Field Notes, 2023). One of the ways the doormen pass information to others is through notes written on small pieces of paper that are placed in front of the spot where they sit. Júlia asked Marta if Liberato had given her anyone's phone number. Marta said she hadn't received it. Júlia commented that she had forgotten and attributed it to his age, saying he is "getting senile", stating that he needs to "retire from the building," because a man of his age shouldn't be sitting at a reception desk for 12 hours anymore, he is tired, needs a vacation, to rest, "if I'm tired, imagine him" (Field Notes, 2023).

Liberato acknowledges what is said in society and the world of work, not specifically about him, but about the general category he represents regarding older people being replaced by younger people due to reduced productivity at work.

*In reality, whether you like it or not, a person is going to get slower, right? If he had the capacity to do ten, he can only manage to do five... you end up decreasing production, right? Someone ends up saying: 'oh, so-and-so, it's already time to replace them with a new one.'* (Liberato, interviewee, 1).

These statements and ways of thinking about the older worker and the aging process in labor relations highlight structural ageism, which seeks to define a place of fragility and unproductivity, producing limitations on the role an older person can play in the workplace. Some studies demonstrate existing ageist practices in different jobs (Amorim *et al.*, 2019; Tonelli *et al.*, 2020; Vasconcelos, 2012) but not in the context of residential doorway work, as done in this study.

The colleagues also recognize the replacement of older people by younger ones. Jorge, however, transcends this replacement not due to a lack of productive reduction, but due to death, by saying that Liberato "will be gone soon," referring to the fact of dying and that "everything stays," meaning leaving behind material possessions: "*Mr. Liberato is already retired and still works, if I were him I wouldn't work anymore, soon he'll be gone and everything stays, you see, everything stays, put someone else in his place, it's over*" (Jorge, interviewee, 3). The fact that Liberato is retired meant having to enjoy life, in Jorge's view.

As presented in the methodological course, the doormen in this research are employees of the building with formal contracts, enjoying labor rights. It is a little more than the minimum wage that they receive. However, this is not enough to cover their living expenses, especially since Maringá is a city with a high cost of living. To supplement their income on their days off, the doormen seek informal jobs. Some of them, like Jorge, have, in addition to their formal job as a doorman, two more informal jobs.

Broader understandings present aging from a biopsychosocial perspective (Whitbourne *et al.*, 2015), but in this study, an economic dimension is identified, as older individuals, in addition to having their formal jobs, seek other informal work for their subsistence, even if it means dangerous jobs like food delivery on motorcycles, as in the case of Jorge in this study. Also, some retirees still need to work and take on other informal jobs as a means of sustaining their lives. Brazilian studies



on aging in the field of Administration do not emphasize such socioeconomic aspects. Liberato, retired, who on some days off does extra work, states the fatigue he feels in his formal job (Medelin building), but that he only waits for his wife to retire to resign, as the income will be sufficient for survival:

*My wife has little time left until she retires, and as soon as she retires, I'll leave here. I leave because, in fact, we get tired, right? It's 12 hours here that you have to stay practically seated, if you stand up and don't feel well, it seems like the job itself doesn't match with us staying. If my wife retires, then the income is enough for our survival, right? I have been retired for six years already. (Liberato, interviewee, 1).*

The economic dimension identified in this study reveals the multiple challenges that older workers face in labor relations in Brazil. In addition to facing ageism and the particularities of the aging process, they need to deal with economic problems at this stage of life (Camarano & Pasinato, 2007). In this sense, the condition of economic precariousness, characteristic of a large portion of workers in the Brazilian context, also includes older people who, for their livelihoods, need to find ways to obtain or improve their income. Although the prevailing discourse in society is to reduce the workload as one ages, many older people, as illustrated in this research, even when retired, seek to work formally or informally because retirement money is not sufficient.

At the same time that Liberato claims to be tired of working, he says that work allows him to feel good, as the job of a doorman does not require physical effort to open doors for the residents, but that aging brings an accumulated fatigue of living, in which the years lived cause these conflicts:

*The very weight of your age brings an accumulated tiredness, whether you like it or not, whether you want it or not... but it's not the tiredness from working because, on the days I work, I even feel better than, but it's the tiredness of life, right, the very life of living, you get worn out, right. (Jorge, interviewee, 3).*

The doormen of this study recognize their aging process and the marked consequences on their bodies and minds. Studies point to aging and cognitive declines (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2019; Deary *et al.*, 2009; Prince *et al.*, 2015). The mind, as Marta says, ages, and memory is something that weakens quickly. When forgetting things, she gets upset, which demonstrates the existing conflict between wanting to remember things with the same consistency as when she was younger:

*I think that as the years go by, they leave us like this, our bodies weakened. So, memory is something that I think weakens very quickly, and sometimes because we forget things, you know. I forget things, I don't like that feeling of forgetting... our minds age over time and I can't tell you that I have the same clarity of ideas that I had when I was 20 years old. (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).*

Regarding associating the residents' images with their apartment numbers and many of their names, Marta says her mind is more trained now, as she finds it easier: *"I think that even now my mind is more trained for this than when I first came in, you know"* (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023). This reflects what some studies show: that exercising the brain can delay the consequences, such as memory loss resulting from the aging process (Deary *et al.*, 2009). Thus, participation in mental or stimulating activities reduces cognitive decline (Deary *et al.*, 2009). However, after a certain age, even with brain training, the ability to memorize is reduced. This was evidenced with Liberato, who, even after working fifteen years in the building and constantly having to learn new names, associate residents with their apartment numbers, and so on, already has difficulties memorizing and remembering names, having to resort to the record book for assistance.

Conflict at **work** was another element that was present in this study. This workplace conflict occurs between the residents and the doormen and among the doormen themselves. Regarding the residents and the doormen, conflicts arise from the discrimination practiced by many residents towards the doormen's work by reducing their role to just opening and closing the door. The residents think that "the doorman is just to open and close the door," but no, they need to "be responsible" for providing security in the building (Field Notes, 2023). Discrimination emerges from the prejudice against a doorman who has not studied, and this is reflected in discriminatory acts reported by all the doormen in the interviews and observations conducted:

*The other one who pretends I don't even exist, I would tell you that's a certain prejudice. What idea do people have of a doorman? That the doorman is an ignorant guy, that the doorman is a guy who didn't study, that he doesn't even know how to read and write properly, that's the image many people have of doormen, and it's not like that, it will never be like that? I know doormen who have a higher education, and so what? (Marta, interviewee 2, 2023).*

Sociability, for Simmel, entails relationships between equals, in which symmetry prevails (Barros, 2008). The results do not show a relationship of equals and symmetry between the doormen and the residents, only among the doormen themselves. This practice of discrimination resides in the profession exercised by the doormen, in other words, the fact that they are doormen, an undervalued profession. In this sense, the residents see the doormen as their servants, whom they demand to attend to them immediately or do things they cannot. Such conflicts also reveal social inequalities in labor relations, which define "superior" and "inferior" professions.

They are often seen as invisible when residents pass by and do not greet them, and when there is some kind of dialogue, it occurs in a humiliating manner:

*Yeah... there are some who are really rude, I sometimes leave them waiting here to attend to one, attend to another, there are people who don't understand... when he enters, I apologize: 'sometimes the system goes down, so it takes longer too.' Then he gets angry about it... makes a sour face, you know. (Jorge, interviewee 3, 2023).*

*He got nervous, got very angry with me, said I was incompetent, 'I'm going to talk to the manager' [the resident said]... He even said to me here like this: 'you are obliged to open the gate, what are you doing there?' Why are you being paid? (Liberato, interviewee, 1).*

Each resident receives a garage gate remote control and a tag. Tag is a proximity control for access to both gates of the building that authorizes entry. Many residents do not use it and demand that the doormen open the doors for them. Since the release of the entrance and garage doors operates with a system, sometimes this system malfunctions and freezes, requiring a restart. This can take a few seconds. During this wait, the residents get angry, thinking that the doormen don't want to open, as shown in the excerpts above. Some conflicts lead residents to demand the doormen be fired because they oppose the fact that the doormen are following the orders that were given.

Regarding the conflicts at work between the doormen, these conflicts occur even though the doormen work different shifts and meet for a few minutes during the shift change. These conflicts involve a unique work issue. Although there are general work rules in the building, each doorman has their own personality, work style, and other characteristics. As a consequence, the way a doorman works is perceived by other doormen, as the residents express this to the doorman himself and to others. In this way, this doorman gains knowledge about the work methods of others. For example, residents say they know Liberato's shift and the day he is in there because they don't even need to call the front desk to open the laundry room door, as it is already "unlocked" when they approach (Field Notes, 2023). Proactive attitude considered relevant by the residents.

The psychosocial function of conflict, in the context of the work of older doormen, can then be understood as part of the dynamics of power and resistance in the workplace. While gossip acts as a tool for social cohesion, conflict often reflects latent tensions between different expectations about the workers' roles and their interactions with the residents. Ageism, as observed in this study, is an example of how conflict reflects social and economic inequalities that directly impact the lives of doormen.

For residents to access the gym and the laundry room, they must call the front desk, as both doors are locked by a system that only releases them when the doorman presses the buttons to unlock the door. In the case of the laundry room, first, the resident calls to ask if there is a machine available at the moment, then they go to the laundry room, and the door needs to be unlocked. The next step is to choose the available machine, which also needs to be turned on by the doorman with a button at the front desk. The same process happens with the dryers.

Liberato stays alert to open the door when the person arrives at the laundry or gym. He said it is "unnecessary" for the person to call to open the door or call to start the washing machine since he already made the first call asking about availability, which totals "three calls" (Field Notes, 2023). He said that "some doormen don't do that" that "some wait for the resident to make the three calls" (Field Diary, 2023). These statements from Liberato reveal his discontent regarding some fellow doormen who wait for the residents to call to open the doors. This conflict occurs, as already mentioned, due to the residents appreciating a certain work style, like that of Liberato, and expressing this directly to him and to others.

## Conclusion

This study revealed dynamics related to the work of older doormen in residential buildings, highlighting the role of socialization practices, especially through gossip and conflicts, in the organization of work routines. It was observed that the social interactions between the doormen and other workers are permeated by practices that, in addition to serving as entertainment, contribute to the efficient coordination of daily tasks. However, challenges such as ageism, discrimination, and the invisibility of these professionals' work were also identified.

One of the main findings of this study was the identification of gossip as a work optimization mechanism, as it enables the quick exchange of information between the doormen and other building staff. Although gossip is often associated with negative aspects, here, this situation was also seen as a practice that contributes to the functioning of the building. This finding adds to the positive dimension of gossip in organizations found in the literature (Kniffin & Sloan Wilson, 2010; Lee & Barnes, 2021; Wax *et al.*, 2022), but it expands this literature by identifying the role of optimizing and maintaining balance in work relationships. On the other hand, the conflicts generated by age prejudice and the different ways of perceiving the work of older doormen reveal the tensions in labor relations in environments with age diversity.

The theoretical contribution of this study to the literature on aging in organizations lies in revealing the practices of socialization, gossip, and conflicts as mechanisms of sociability in work relationships. The practical implications of this study are relevant. Regarding age management, the challenges faced by older doormen indicate the need for organizational policies that consider the physical and cognitive limitations related to aging. It would be appropriate for organizations to promote flexible schedules, regular breaks, and the redistribution of tasks that require less physical effort, creating a work environment more adapted to the capabilities of older workers. Valuing the experience of these professionals can reduce the idea that age compromises productivity.

Moreover, the study showed that the participation of older workers in continuous development activities can help mitigate the effects of cognitive aging. Marta's account of how her work helped "train" her mind exemplifies how training programs can benefit both workers and the organization. Training programs focused on skill development and adaptation to new technologies can be useful in maintaining the self-esteem and adaptability of older employees, highlighting the company's commitment to the inclusion of all its workers.

Another point raised was the issue of intergenerational conflicts and the discrimination faced by doormen in the workplace. The devaluation of their roles and the prejudice they face demonstrate the need to create an organizational culture that promotes respect for age diversity. Initiatives such as awareness campaigns and the creation of dialogue spaces between workers of different ages can help reduce tensions and promote greater integration within teams. These practices can contribute to a more collaborative and balanced work environment.

Although this study has contributed to the understanding of work dynamics and the challenges faced by older doormen, it presents limitations regarding generalization, as it was conducted in a single residential building. Another limitation lies in the unilateral perspective adopted in the studies, as only the perspective of older workers regarding socialization practices was taken into account. Future studies can broaden the scope of the investigation by including other buildings and organizational contexts to verify if the functions of gossip and the conflicts observed

here are reproduced in other work environments, as well as including other actors in the investigations, such as residents and workers who provide services in the buildings.

In conclusion, this study offers an analysis of the dynamics of sociability, conflicts, and ageism in the workplace of older doormen. In addition to contributing theoretically to the understanding of these phenomena, it suggests practical implications for improving the working conditions of the older through more inclusive and adaptive organizational policies. The adoption of these practices can result in better working conditions for older professionals and a more harmonious and productive work environment.

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## Conflict of interests

The authors have stated that there is no conflict of interest.

## Inclusive language

The authors use inclusive language that acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities.

## Authors' contributions

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